

Libby Community Advisory Group

Meeting Summary

January 12, 2006

Introductions

Gerald Mueller and members of the Libby Community Advisory Group (CAG) introduced themselves. A list of the members in attendance is attached below as Appendix 1.

Agenda

The CAG agreed to the following agenda for this meeting:

- = Presentation by Dr. Tony Ward
- = Agency Reports
 - EPA
 - ⊗ State
 - ⊗ TAG
 - ⊗ CARD Clinic & Karmanos Cancer Institute Presentation
- = Public Comment

Dr. Tony Ward Presentation

At the May 2005 CAG meeting, Dr. Tony Ward, Research Assistant Professor in the University of Montana Center for Environmental Health Sciences, presented sampling results for asbestos concentrations in tree bark and cores at three locations around the mine. After his presentation, the CAG asked Dr. Ward to conduct sampling in Libby as well as around the mine. In response to this request, Dr. Ward did conduct additional sampling in town and at tonight's meeting, he presented results of this and previous sampling using the Power Point Presentation included in Appendix 2.

CAG Member Question - How do you get historical data from trees?

Answer - We look at different tree species and tree ages.

Audience Member Question - Does the wind dislodge asbestos fibers deposited on tree bark?

Answer - We do not know, but we want to examine this question.

CAG Member Question - You said that you looked at four different tree species, Douglas Fir, Larch, Ponderosa Pine, And Lodgepole Pine. Did you see a difference in asbestos levels among them?

Answer - Differences did occur, but they were not consistent. Two of the same type of trees growing next to each other had different asbestos concentrations in their bark.

CAG Member Question - Do you plan to sample outside of the W.R. Grace perimeter?

Answer - Yes. The sampling plan calls for collecting samples on radii of concentric circles centered on the mine.

CAG Member Question - You mentioned sampling at the middle school in Libby. Did you also sample at the high school?

Answer - No.

Audience Member Question - Would burning the wood from contaminated trees either in stoves or forest fires release asbestos to the air?

Answer - We have not studied and therefore cannot answer this question.

CAG Member Question - This question is for EPA. If you saw concentrations in homes corresponding to the tree bark levels seen by Dr. Ward, would cleanup be required?

Answer by Peggy Churchill - Dr. Ward is reporting the number of asbestos fibers per square centimeter. EPA reports soil or bulk sample results in mass of asbestos fibers per gram of (soil/insulation) sample. Comparing our results to those of Dr. Ward is like comparing apples to oranges. While we do want to look at this issue, we are not focused on it now. In terms of investigations, Troy is now our highest priority and the mine is next.

Audience Member Question - We are worried about the risk of wood burning. Is it safe to remove the ashes?

Answer - We do not have enough information to answer this question. It is on the top of our list, however.

CAG Member Comment - The sampling demonstrates that the highest levels of asbestos in tree bark are on the W.R. Grace property which is not open to wood collection.

CAG Member Question - Dr. Ward mentioned that his bark sampling is new science that has not been fully investigated. How will this topic affect the Record of Decision (ROD)?

Answer by Peggy Churchill - I can't say how the ROD will be affected at this point. The tree bark contamination is a subject that needs attention.

CAG Member Comment - I appreciate the communication that Dr. Ward has had with Libby schools. Tomorrow we will be providing information to parents about this topic. While we do not have all the answers, we have decided that the trees will not be disturbed to avoid creating a contamination risk.

Audience Member Question - Did your research get fully funded, and how long will your current funding last?

Answer by Dr. Ward - We are conducting this research on a shoe string budget. We are not funded as much as we would like. We remain committed to it, however, as demonstrated by the presence tonight of Dr. Dwyer, the UM Vice President of Research, and Bill Johnston, head of the UM Foundation.

Audience Member Comment - We need to help you to get funding.

Comment by Dr. Ward - You have asked us before to come back and report results when we have some. We will return when we have a complete data set and are able to answer more of your questions about what the data mean.

EPA Report

Peggy Churchill reported on behalf of EPA on the following topics.

General Cleanup - Cleanup activity is now quiet, but will resume the last week of February. Work is underway on work plans and cleanup project design.

Record of Decision - Ms. Churchill passed out a chart illustrating the how various actions and reports will lead to the ROD. See Appendix 3.

Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RIFS) - The RIFS should be completed this spring.

Inspector & Supervisor Training - Dates for the training which EPA will conduct in cooperation with DEQ and the local community college have not yet been set. Please pass the word about this free training.

Dream It-Do It Conference - This conference will be a two-day event and will happen in either May or August. It will focus on the industrial park.

Audience Member Comment - Before Christmas we had a freeze and then rain. Because the cleanup of my property left my yard sloped the wrong way, we had a lake under our deck. I called and got help from your staff. Thank you to EPA for this assistance fixing my problem.

State Report

Catherine LeCours, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), reported on behalf of the State of Montana on the Troy cleanup. The investigation for the cleanup is now called the Troy Asbestos Property Evaluation. It is under review and will be presented to the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) and the CAG in February or March. If funding is available, investigation in Troy will begin this summer. Cleanup at the high school will take place in the summer.

Audience Member Question - Do you have the funding for the cleanup work in Troy yet?

Answer - No.

Audience Member Question - When will you know if funding will be available?

Answer by Peggy Churchill - I have requested the funding. We should know by May.

CAG Member Question - Will the funding for Troy come out of or be in addition to the Libby cleanup funding?

Answer - Troy funding will be in addition to the Libby cleanup funding.

TAG Report

Gayla Benefield reported on behalf of TAG. Dr. Gerry Henningsen has been hired to act as our Technical Advisor. He was scheduled to make a presentation tonight, but his doctor prohibited him from flying. He will be here in February. LaVerne Nixon is a new TAG Board member. Helen Clarke has replaced LeRoy Thom as our Vice President.

CARD Clinic Report

Tanis Hernandez reported on behalf of the CARD Clinic on the following subjects.

Blood Drawing - CARD will conduct a blood drawing in support of our research projects on January 20 from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. We expect to continue these drawings on a quarterly basis. It is important for the entire Libby community to participate in these drawings as we need samples from three groups: people who were exposed to asbestos and have developed asbestos-related disease (ARD), people who were exposed but who have not developed ARD, and people who were not exposed. With the informed consent of blood drawing participants, we will be banking blood samples. People will understand the research to which their blood samples will be used.

Karmanos Cancer - Ms. Hernandez introduced two visitors from the Karmanos Cancer Institute which is associated with Wayne State University in Detroit Michigan. Dr. Becky Cline is a communication researcher and Lisa Berry-Bobovski is the Associate Director of the Behavioral and Field Research Core. The Karmanos Cancer Institute has a small grant from the Center for Disease Control to start a National Center for Vermiculite and Asbestos-Related Cancer. The purpose of the current project is to devise a communication strategy for communities that have had vermiculite/asbestos exposure about the consequences of the exposure so they can take appropriate actions, if action is warranted. Dr. Cline stated that she and Lisa are in Libby in response to the visit by Dr. Black and Dr. Whitehouse to the Karmanos Cancer Institute. She said that they are seeking to understand how people in Libby ~~have~~ heard about and processed information about the asbestos exposure and potential risks. They are working in partnership with CARD, but they will conduct focus groups independently in March in Libby to accomplish three things: design messages for other communities; understand the psychosocial effects of the “slow motion disaster” that occurred here; and establish a foundation for future scientific studies. The focus groups will involve a range of people, including those with asbestos-related disease, their family members, and community members who do not have disease personally or in their families. The project truly needs a broad representation of all of the different points of view about the situation in Libby. Those who participate in the two hour focus groups will be compensated for their time with Libby bucks. Ms. Berry-Bobovski emphasized that she was impressed with the vitality of the Libby community and individuals she has met. She said that despite her initial impression from reading about Libby, she definitely does not perceive Libby to be a “dying community”.

National Asbestos Legislation - LeRoy Thom reported that staff from Senator Baucus’ and Senator Spector’s offices met with Dr. Black and Dr. Whitehouse and CARD board members to hear CARD view of the asbestos legislation. Dr. Black and Dr. Whitehouse explained how the bill as drafted would adversely affect Libby because most people here would be excluded from coverage. We also explained how coverage of the W.R. Grace medical plan administered by HNA is constantly shrinking. We were impressed that Senator Baucus had given his new staff strict marching orders to come here and listen to our concerns. The Senate staff people also met separately with victim lawyers and with the Lincoln County Asbestos Victim Relief Organization.

Audience Member Question - What is on the horizon at CARD regarding this specific project with Karmanos Cancer Institute?

Answer - We are waiting for approval of the planned research by the research ethics review board and once it is given we will begin recruiting participants for the research projects.

CAG Member Comment - Recruitment can be made by email messages. Each person who

receives the message can be asked to send it to ten others.

Answer - That is a good idea. We will also be using the local print, television, and radio media to solicit participation from the community.

Public Comment

CAG Member Comment - We were very relieved that the judge in the W.R. Grace criminal trial refused to move the trial out of Missoula.

Next Meeting

The next CAG meeting was scheduled for 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. on the third Thursday in February, February 16, 2006 in the Ponderosa Room of Libby City Hall.

Appendix 1

CAG Member & Guest Attendance List January 12, 2006

Members	Group/Organization Represented
David Latham	<i>The Montanian Newspaper</i>
K.W. Maki	Libby Schools
Ken Hays	Libby Senior Citizens
Peggy Churchill	EPA Project Manager
Catherine LeCours	DEQ
LeRoy Thom	LAMP/CARD
Gayla Benefield	LCAVRO/TAG
Eileen Carney	Montana State Board of Respiratory Care
Gary Swenson	Libby Volunteer Fire Department

